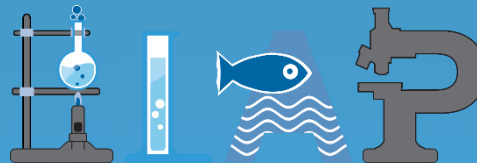


ELAP Update

2017 CWEA Conference

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Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program
April 27, 2017 | Palm Springs



Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program
STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD

Agenda

- Background
- Our Accomplishments
- Summarize

Background

- ELAP was moved to the Water Board in 2014
- The Water Board commissioned an Expert Review Panel to make recommendations on how to improve ELAP
- Panel released 2 reports with recommendation and findings October 2015 and April 2017

Findings

- Poor credibility with the Stakeholder Community
- Lack of Effective Accreditation Process
- Absence of Routine Management Processes
- Inadequate Resources

Recommendations

- Establish a Management System
- Adopt Laboratory Accreditation Standards
- Ensure Relevant Analytical Methods
- Expand Resources
- Enhance Communication

Our Accomplishments

- *We have adopted a management system*
- Improved program resources
- We have a plan to ensure relevant methods
- Selected a new laboratory accreditation standard
- Increased communications with stakeholders

Adopted a Management System

- Created a new Quality Manual and Standard
 - Operating Procedures
- We are holding staff accountable
- Roles and expectations are clearly defined

Results

- We are in early stages of implementation
 - Already seeing improved consistency in processes
- 8 staff have left ELAP
 - 30% turnover
- 2 staff have been reassigned
 - Setting expectations and ensuring staff meet them
- We have better people
 - Knowledgeable, better communicators, cultural shift

Complaints

- We inherited over 150 complaints
 - They were not addressed or tracked by former management
- We now have a process to formally resolve complaints
- And we are taking action to prevent complaints of the same nature in the future

Our Accomplishments

- We have adopted a management system
- ***Improved program resources***
- We have a plan to ensure relevant methods
- Selected a new laboratory accreditation standard
- Increased communications with stakeholders

Improved Program Resources

- Have a deficit in program resources
- We've taken several actions to address this:
 - Restructured ELAP
 - Increased staff training
 - Established a reciprocity process
 - Increased fees

Restructured ELAP

- Created specialized units
 - Enforcement Unit
 - Proficiency Testing (PT) Unit
 - Assessment Staff
 - Planning
- Previously, there was no separation of duties between staff
 - Staff managed themselves
 - Some tasks did not get done at all

Enforcement Unit

- Created an enforcement unit
 - Did not previously exist
- They investigate complaints and referrals
- Game changer

Our Enforcement Unit is Active

- We have received 31 referrals and conducted 25
- investigations
 - 12 unannounced on-site visits
 - 13 data audits
- Those investigations have resulted in 18 actions
- This is a major change from where we were before
 - ELAP had never taken a single independent enforcement action

Results

- 11 Notices of Violation
- 1 Certificate Revoked
- 4 FOT/Methods Revoked
- 1 FOT Suspended
- 1 Criminal Charge

Proficiency Testing Unit

- ELAP was not evaluating PT results regularly
- We now evaluate annual and renewal year PT results for all laboratories
- We're in the process of securing funding for a PT Database
- Created a PT workgroup to address PT implementation issues

Results

- Drastic improvement
- PTs were not being examined regularly before
- They are being examined now

What have we found

- About 40% of our laboratories do not complete all required tests
- About 10% of our labs have failures

Action Plan

- Laboratories are not getting a free pass anymore
 - Enforcing our 20+ year old regulations
- We have denied certification requests for approximately 800 analyses to 45 laboratories since September 2016
 - 777 for results being absent
 - 27 for failures
- We are revoking or denying accreditation for analyses for laboratories who do not submit results every year

Assessment Unit

Drinking Water Laboratories	Non-Drinking Water Laboratories
313 are current	147 are current
41 are not current	144 are not current
9 are over 5 years	21 are over 5 years
14 are over 4 years	35 are over 4 years
18 are over 3 years	88 are over 3 years

Reciprocity

- We have been able to partly address our backlog by establishing a reciprocity process
- Certified 34 laboratories in 2016
- 100+ labs who utilize reciprocity

Third-Party Assessors

- We see the acceptance of third-party assessments as a necessary step
 - ELAP cannot assess all laboratories on its own
- However, the Panel was vague on how to implement this recommendation
- Listen in or attend the May 3rd Board Public Workshop

Our Accomplishments

- We have adopted a management system
- Improved program resources
- ***We have a plan to ensure relevant methods***
- Selected a new laboratory accreditation standard
- Increased communications with stakeholders

Ensure Relevant Methods

- Short term: We updated our drinking water and wastewater FOTs to include current methods
 - Hazardous waste is in the works
- Long term: We will eliminate specific methods from our regulations
 - 2018 regulation package
 - Allows us to update Field of Testing lists as needed

Our Accomplishments

- We have adopted a management system
- Improved program resources
- We have a plan to ensure relevant methods
- ***Selected a new laboratory accreditation standard***
- Increased communications with stakeholders

Selected a Laboratory Standard

- We identified 58 proposed modifications in collaboration with the ELTAC, State Agency Partners and lab community
- Still deliberating the final form of the standard

Timeline to Adoption of Draft Regulations

- We're ready to begin drafting regulation text immediately
- We plan to workshop the text this summer
 - We've also created a "Comments" inbox for direct stakeholder participation for those unable to attend workshops
 - We have added a Regulations tab to our homepage to keep everyone up-to-date
- We anticipate bringing a regulations package to you for adoption in Spring 2018

Our Accomplishments

- We have adopted a management system
- Improved program resources
- We have a plan to ensure relevant methods
- Selected a new laboratory accreditation standard
- ***Increased communications with stakeholders***

Increased Stakeholder Communication

- Rebuilt our technical advisory committee (ELTAC)
- Formed a new advisory body from representatives of the state agencies ELAP serves (State Agency Partners Committee)
- Established communications with the broader stakeholder community

ELTAC is Engaged

- They have met 8 times since March 2016
 - Only three meetings are required in the committee By-Laws
 - Communications between ELAP and ELTAC are positive and productive
- They are responding to our requests for advice on program reforms
 - And we communicate with them when we follow a different path

ELTAC Accomplishments

- Developed a mission statement
- Made four recommendations that ELAP has accepted:
 - Offer certification by analyte
 - Agency and laboratory coordination process for new regulatory needs
 - PT requirement for standard
 - Technical requirement for standard
- List of proposed modifications to the standard

State Agency Partners Active

- Did not exist previously
 - Not only have they been formed, but they met 8 times in 2016
- What have they accomplished
 - Agency/lab coordination process for new methods
 - Defined mutual needs for lab standard deliberations
 - Verifying content of FOT lists
 - Reviewed potential modifications to standard

Communications with the laboratory community

- We've established new avenues to communicate with the community
 - Email/Phone
 - Website
 - Newsletter
 - Workshops
 - Panel webinars
- We anticipate further improving communications in 2017

Summing it up

- We've made progress on initial five recommendations
 - Still developing approach to supplemental recommendations
- Program has undergone major change
- ELAP is a better and more sustainable program in the long term